



CEPPS/IFES Quarterly Report: October 1, 2012–December 31, 2012

NEPAL: STRENGTHEN POLITICAL PARTIES, ELECTORAL AND LEGISLATIVE PROCESSES

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International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES) Quarterly Report

I. SUMMARY

Lack of any agreement between major political parties on future elections and representative arrangements has seen the caretaker government of Unified Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist) (UCPN (M)) Prime Minister (PM) Bhattarai and Madesh allies stumble through this quarter while under no great threat from the opposition parties. Elections initially announced for November 22, 2012 did not occur: the subsequently announced April/May 2013 election date seems highly unlikely. With budget funding through to July 2013, and no sign of any incentives or breakthroughs for progress on a government to lead the country to elections, it may not be possible to hold elections in 2013. While at times it seemed as though some political progress could be made, by the end of the quarter the situation was no closer to resolution than in September.

IFES has conducted an analysis of new census data and its impact on representation quotas, and has engaged with political parties on their discussions about reducing the number of seats in the next parliament which would have a critical impact on women's and/or minority representation. During the quarter, IFES has continued to engage with the Electoral Commission of Nepal (ECN) on constitutional and legal requirements for a future election, including on delegation of ECN powers. Comment has been provided to the ECN on the latest draft of the Political Party law presented by the ECN to workshops for parties.

This period, IFES' technical and capacity building support was crucial for assisting the ECN to understand gaps in current voter registration performance and plan future voter registration activities; promoting understanding in the ECN and the donor community of the implications of using electronic voting machines (EVMs); and providing a preliminary assessment of the ECN's ballot printing capacity and needs for a forthcoming election.

IFES has maintained its lead coordination role in Building Resources in Democracy, Governance and Elections (BRIDGE), working with the ECN and its BRIDGE partners, the United Nations

Development Programme (UNDP) and the International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (IDEA). During this quarter, IFES provided logistics coordination, materials development and facilitation support for the UNDP Electoral Support Project (ESP) funded Training the Facilitator (TiF) BRIDGE workshop and Gender and Election BRIDGE workshop for media. IFES reviewed BRIDGE Nepal program evaluation report prepared by UNDP ESP and provided extensive feedback, comments and suggestions. IFES continued to assess and evaluate outcomes of BRIDGE workshops in Nepal through its pre-post survey tests, and later follow up with workshop participants.

IFES guidance on workshop agendas and content, training manuals and products, and website is developing the capacities of the ECN's training and voter education teams, information technology (IT) team and Electoral Education and Information Centre (EEIC) library staff. IFES supported a four-member ECN delegation team to attend a study trip to the 2012 US election. On a daily basis, IFES' in-house team at the ECN engages in capacity building support for their ECN counterparts.

IFES continues to provide ongoing and daily capacity building support in ECN and EEIC voter education efforts. This quarter, IFES has supported the ECN in commencing design work on new outreach manuals, presentation materials to be used by electoral educators down to community level, and materials to be used in electoral education by social studies teachers. Full hosting of the new ECN website on the ECN server is now running, and the ECN has been induced into action to institute a process for developing its web content. IFES provided significant advice to UNDP ESP supported Voter Education (VE) consultants in developing proposals for voter education strategies and ESP education materials.

The major materials support for voter education this quarter was provided through IFES civil society organization (CSO) sub-awardees for their campaign to support the ECN's voter registration program. Radio and TV public service announcements (PSAs) produced last quarter were finally approved for broadcast by the Commission after some amendments. Innovative concepts – such as electoral education pocket books and flipcharts – on which design has commenced this quarter are scheduled for production late next quarter.

All five CSO sub-grantees completed their scheduled activities to end December, in motivating and educating their target groups - youth, women, Dalits, and Freed Kamaiyas - on continuous voter registration. A major focus of the program this quarter was on reaching potential voters, especially returning migrants, during the October/November festival season in Nepal. Training and preparations for five mini surveys were completed. IFES and National Federation for the Disabled, Nepal (NFDN) commenced the development of the recently approved 2-year project to support participation in electoral/civic activities by people with disabilities.

Analyses of issues such as voter registration and census data, citizenship certificate issues, the ECN's plans to use EVMs versus paper ballots, draft election ordinances, minority quotas, and election preparation activities were distributed to stakeholders.

II. BACKGROUND

Political Updates

Lack of any agreement between major political parties on future elections and representative arrangements has seen the caretaker government of UCPN (M) PM Bhattarai and Madesh allies stumble through this quarter while under no great threat from the opposition parties, which appear to lack both the unity and the confidence in their strength to force a showdown with the caretaker government. While at times during the quarter it seemed as though some political progress could be made, by the end of the quarter the political situation was no closer to resolution than in September.

During this quarter, multiple successive deadlines have been issued by the President for the formation of a national unity/consensus government to organize elections, with little apparent effect other than to diminish his already limited authority. The opposition parties will not accept the caretaker government's insistence on agreement on a package deal covering election date, appointments to constitutional bodies, an electoral legal framework and resolution of outstanding constitutional disagreements before it steps down. The caretaker government will not accept the opposition's nominee of Nepali Congress (NC) leader Koirala as PM. Argument has tended to be circular, with much returning to previous positions: after all parties agreeing in October that there would be elections, by the end of the quarter there was some movement - including by UCPN (M) Chair Prachandra – back towards a position of reviving the old Constituent Assembly. There have been shifting demands by both sides, particularly the caretaker government. In this whirlpool, the government forces have seemed less dazed and confused than the opposition. The only agreement appears to be that the next parliament will retain appointed seats, in case some party leaders cannot get elected.

While purportedly ‘announcing’ an April/May 2013 election date, key events during the quarter indicated the caretaker government was not serious about this, and by the end of the quarter the prospect of an April/May election was widely discarded except by the media. These key events included the announcement of a UCPN (M) national convention for early February 2013, the failure to plan for any replacements for the Election Commissioners, the first of whom retired in November 2012 and the other two due to retire in January 2013, and the signing of a budget ordinance by the President assuring the caretaker government of funds to continue current activities through to July 15, 2013. The Election Commission had also indicated that if the electoral legal framework was not in place by end of December/early January, they would not be organizing April/May elections. Madhes-based parties reiterated in December that they would boycott elections if the Election Commission continues to register as voters only those Nepalis with citizenship certificates,

If there is a continued absence of any incentives (including internal violence and external pressure) to hold elections, and with assured funding, the caretaker government may well be untroubled to hold power until at least August 2013. By this time it would be too late to organize elections for October/November 2013, given the ECN's insistence on a 120-day lead time for elections following agreement on a legal framework.

Program Objectives

Under the Consortium of Elections and Political Strengthening (CEPPS III), IFES activities will support one of the three principal objectives as detailed by the U.S. Agency for International

Development (USAID): 2) Strengthen institutions involved in electoral processes, either as actors or participants, and the following sub-objectives:

- Strengthen democratic legal framework,
- Strengthen the ECN's electoral management capacity, and
- Expand and improve delivery of voter education.

In support of the above, IFES will achieve the following objectives:

- To ensure that Nepal develops a body of legislation on the electoral process that is comprehensive, coherent and consistent; which conforms to international standards and suits the socio-economic context and new political realities of Nepal.
- To improve the capacity of the ECN to manage future elections and consolidate its mandate and performance through the provision of high level technical assistance in the legal, management and technical aspects of elections and long-term professional development capacity building.
- To expand and improve the delivery of voter education by working with the ECN and selected non-governmental organizations to plan, develop, and implement effective voter education programs, with a focus on capacity building, in order to enhance the electorate's understanding of democratic practices and rights, and increase participation in the electoral process.
- To closely monitor, analyze and report on the overall electoral process with a focus on the Election Commission's internal activities and external interaction with other electoral stakeholders.
- To provide a facility that can address unforeseen windows of opportunity that may arise in Nepal's unpredictable post-conflict political and electoral environment, in order to achieve immediate beneficial results in line with the program objectives.

III. PROGRAM ACTIVITIES

1. Strengthening Democratic Legal Framework

Summary: The continuing political uncertainty and allocation of drafting resources within the ECN to other duties has affected IFES technical and capacity building support on legal reform to the ECN and other stakeholders this quarter. IFES has conducted an analysis of new census data and its impact on representation quotas, and has engaged with political parties on their discussions about reducing the number of seats in the next parliament which would have a critical impact on women's and/or minority representation. IFES has continued to engage with the ECN on constitutional and legal changes which are practical to be done by ordinance for a future election, and have finally obtained, translated and distributed the draft election ordinances sent to the President by the Prime Minister's Office last quarter. IFES has provided comment to the ECN on the latest draft of the political party law presented by the ECN to workshops for parties on the last week for December.

Activity 1.1 – Technical Assistance

During this past quarter, IFES' USAID and Norwegian government funded law reform programs have again closely coordinated their activities. This coordination, which has proven extremely effective, may not be possible past April 2013. In late December, the Norwegian Embassy in Nepal approved a no -extension of the current funding for IFES electoral law reform program which will end April

2013, and by that date will decide, depending on progress in the political environment in Nepal, whether to provide further funding for election law reform.

Little progress has been made on finalizing a new draft election law this quarter. However a draft of a political party law, agreed to by an inter-departmental committee of the Government, was presented by the ECN to political parties at workshops on December 24 and 26, 2012. IFES has provided comments to the ECN on this draft, which, on a number of issues such as eligibility for party membership, sanctions and party financing has retreated from some of the principles agreed to in the draft developed by the ECN with IFES' assistance. This draft has been prepared as an ordinance for signature by the President, and thus appears to be intended to be used at the next election. However the changes are so significant from the last law that it does not appear likely that there will be sufficient cross-party agreement on it for the president to sign it, if he resumes signing ordinances.

At the same time the ECN provided to IFES for comment a voluminous draft of a code of conduct for parties, observers, media and government officials, that is extremely detailed - rather than the more usual statements of principles. The ECN intends to issue this as a regulation. As at the end of the quarter IFES was preparing its comments: it seems unlikely that this will be considered, and highly unlikely it will be approved by the Commissioners before they leave office in early January.

IFES also provided advice to the ECN on ECN decision-making after the final two Commissioners leave office in January. Significant duties/decision-making responsibilities are given to the Commission itself under current election law, and this can only be exercised by the Secretariat if specifically delegated to specific persons by the Commission. IFES urged extreme caution in delegating powers to the Secretariat in the absence of Commissioners as this could potentially affect perceptions of independence of the Commission as the Secretary would be under the authority of the Executive. It is highly unlikely that any election could be held without the appointment of Commissioners, unless there were substantial changes to the existing law by ordinance – on which there is unlikely to be any political consensus. At the end of the reporting period, it appeared that the Commissioners would not delegate powers to the Secretariat.

Following the release of 2011 census data, IFES analyzed ethnic group breakdowns of the data to ascertain any impact on representation quotas. The proportions of Madhesi have increased slightly, and that of Janajatis decreased slightly, compared to the 2008 election quotas. IFES has also engaged with parties in their discussion on reduction of the number of members in a new elected assembly. In the search for a package deal, it seems that the major parties favor retaining the 240 first-past-the-post (FPTP) seats and taking the whole reduction from the proportional representation seats – with varying proposals for reducing these to 200 to 240, or as low as 95 or 65. These latter reductions would significantly affect representation for dalits and women in particular.

Results: Parties and other stakeholders are better informed on census data on ethnic groups and the minority representation effects of reducing the proportion of proportional representation (PR) seats in a new parliament. Advice to the ECN on delegation of powers followed. Reviews of the new party law draft and code of conduct are in progress.

Activity 1.2 – Capacity Building

Summary: IFES continues to enjoy frequent access to key political decision makers, CSO leaders and ECN Commissioners and staff and as in the past has used this, in informal working meetings, to

improve their understanding of effective methods for developing electoral law; international good practice in electoral law; the effects of systems of representation for minority groups; and required changes to current legal frameworks to enable an election to be held.

No formal capacity building activities were held this quarter, though to its credit, at the end of the quarter the ECN did itself organize review workshops for political parties on the latest draft of a political party law. Meetings were held with key decision-makers in the Indigenous Peoples (IP) Caucus, Communist Party of Nepal (Unified Marxist Leninist) (UML), National Women's Commission, UCPN (M), Central Bureau of Statistics, amongst other organizations, and the inter party group of lawyers charged with developing potential details for an election encompassing 'deal'. Issues discussed included bases for affirmative action programs in law, potential redistricting requirements, size of a new parliament and the impact of the census and of any reduction in PR seats on minority representation. IFES also continued to work with ECN secretariat staff and Commissioners to enhance their understanding of more complex issues that needed to be carefully handled in the lead up to any new election, including delegation of ECN powers, preparation of draft ECN regulations and directions, redistricting, and simplification of representational quotas.

Results: Enhanced stakeholder knowledge of practical impacts of changes to representation. The ECN has a better understanding of election related legal issues in the current political environment.

2. Strengthening Electoral Management Capacity of the ECN

Activity 2.1 – Technical Assistance

Summary: IFES' support was crucial for: assisting the ECN to understand gaps in current voter registration performance and plan future voter registration activities; promoting understanding in the ECN and the donor community of the implications of using EVMs; providing a preliminary assessment of the ECN's ballot printing capacity and needs for a forthcoming election.

IFES has undertaken intensive analysis of voter registration data released during the quarter, and of voter registration data compared to newly released data on the 2011 Nepal Census. This work has been instrumental in assisting the ECN to focus on filling gaps in voter registration activities and in their plans to inform and motivate those yet to register. IFES analysis has highlighted to the ECN issues such as: the low registration rate of women (64%) compared to men (around 80%); that the bulk of registrations is being done at District Administration Offices (DAOs) and Area Administration Offices but that the citizenship certificate issue is not being kept up with through these offices; that while around three-quarters of those eligible to register have so far done so, few 16-17 year olds are registering and that the registration rate of youth voters (18-25 year olds) is significantly lower than for the rest of the population. These analyses are being used by the ECN in planning further special registration activities at the village development committee (VDC) level and for target groups planned for early 2013. IFES has been assisting the ECN in the planning of these activities, initially scheduled by the ECN to start at the end of the quarter, but now postponed to when weather conditions are better in 2013.

IFES met with the Executive Director of the National ID Card Center on December 13 and assisted him with refining a proposal to integrate citizenship certificate applications and voter registration in DAOs. IFES has been liaising with the ECN to set up a meeting between the Secretaries of Home Ministry and the ECN to discuss the proposal, which envisages ECN equipment being used by DAO

staff to integrate citizenship certificate and voter registration data collection with IFES assistance used to train DAO staff. This would greatly increase the effectiveness of ensuring those obtaining citizenship certificates also registered to vote.

IFES has been constantly advising the ECN that a 'plan B' for voting - one that does not rely on EVMs - is needed for the next election. Efforts in this regard were stepped up in this quarter, given the lead time needed to ensure ballot print capacity, the uncertainty about funding/supply of EVMs, and the possibility of an April/May 2012 election. An IFES presentation of assessing EVM use in Nepal was updated, discussed with senior ECN staff, distributed to selected stakeholders and presented at the donor Election Working Group meeting on 26 November. In early 2012, IFES had presented to the ECN a preliminary assessment of ballot paper print capacity issues, including the condition of the presses purchased by USAID in 2007 and now housed at the Janak Education Materials Centre (JEMC).

Despite constant IFES pressure, the ECN had taken no action on these reports, as the former Acting Chief Commissioner strongly maintained that the ECN must rely on the full use of EVMs in the future. Following his retirement on 18 December, IFES received a request from the ECN to support the assessment and refurbishment of the existing ballot print capacity and the purchase of additional capacity if needed. IFES immediately engaged a local expert to commence a preliminary assessment, contacted the relevant suppliers and arranged for supplier engineers to come from India to do a technical assessment of existing equipment in January 2013. This activity was quickly followed by advice from the Indian government that it would not be supplying EVMs to Nepal free of cost: at the end of the quarter it was not clear what use, if any, would be made of EVMs for the next Nepal election. IFES may assist the ECN with the costs of refurbishment (from Windows of opportunity funding) and any required additional print capacity, if donor funding is available.

During October through December, UNDP's ESP program had consultants in country to assess the ECN's needs for election security, training, planning and voter education strategies and long term planning. IFES provided significant information and materials support to these consultants, as ECN data in many relevant areas has not been archived. Reports on these consultancies had not yet been received at the end of the quarter.

Results: The ECN and key stakeholders were fully informed on issues relevant to electronic voting in Nepal. The ECN is better informed of voter registration performance and was assisted with using recent data to better plan future voter registration activities. The ECN was convinced to have a backup plan for paper balloting at the next election. Consultants were hired to assess ECN ballot printing needs and the assessment commenced.

Activity 2.2 – Capacity Building

a) Implementing a Program of Building Resources in Democracy, Governance and Elections (BRIDGE) Training

Summary: IFES maintained its lead coordination role in BRIDGE, working with the ECN and its BRIDGE partners, UNDP and International IDEA. During this quarter, IFES provided logistics coordination, materials development and facilitation support for the UNDP ESP funded Training the Facilitator TtF BRIDGE workshop and Gender and Election BRIDGE workshop for media. IFES reviewed the BRIDGE Nepal program evaluation report prepared by UNDP ESP and provided

extensive feedback, comments and suggestions. IFES continued to assess and evaluate outcomes of BRIDGE workshops in Nepal through its pre-post survey tests, and later follow up with workshop participants.

IFES provided logistics coordination, materials development and facilitation support for the Gender and Elections BRIDGE 3-day workshop for media staff, held in Kailali district, from October 7-9. Twenty five participants, including four women, representing media from nine districts, attended the workshop. IFES provided similar support to the UNDP ESP-funded 10-day TtF BRIDGE workshop in Kathmandu District, including funding the visit of the international expert BRIDGE accrediting facilitator. The TtF produced 21 semi-accredited BRIDGE facilitators (8 women, 13 men), including 10 ECN staff. There were five facilitators, of whom two were women.

Due to the unavailability of key staff from various BRIDGE partners, the BRIDGE planning meetings for the 2013 program, scheduled for December 2012, have had to be postponed to January 2013. Of the ambitious 2012 program of 20 BRIDGE workshops, 13 were completed: the ECN's initial proposals are for 24 BRIDGE workshops in 2013. IFES will be attempting to convince the ECN to plan a more realistic program for 2013, however the ECN is increasingly seeking prime responsibility for BRIDGE decision-making.

IFES also reviewed the BRIDGE Nepal program evaluation report prepared by UNDP ESP-funded consultants, and provided extensive feedback, comments and suggestions to aid in improving the quality of the report. The final report addressed some of these comments, and the consultants have been asked to do a further review and present a revised final report in January 2013. IFES also continued to assess and evaluate outcomes of BRIDGE workshops in Nepal through its pre-post survey tests, and later follow up with workshop participants.

Results: A Gender and Elections BRIDGE workshop for media in Kailali District and a 10-day TtF BRIDGE workshop in Kathmandu District were successfully completed. Twenty one new BRIDGE facilitators were partially accredited. Some improvements achieved due to BRIDGE evaluation report.

b) Organizational Capacity Building

Summary: IFES played a significant role in shaping the ECN's EEIC's 2013 Electoral Education Plan and EEIC Business Plan and provided significant input to the ECN training strategy being developed by the UNDP ESP. IFES guidance on workshop agendas and content, training manuals and products, and website is developing the capacities of the ECN's training and voter education teams, IT team and EEIC library staff. IFES supported a four-member ECN delegation team to attend a study trip to the 2012 US election. On a daily basis, IFES' in-house team at the ECN - the Training Advisor (TA), Public Information Specialist (PIS) and Library Development Consultant (LDC) engage in capacity building support for their ECN counterparts.

IFES' in-house team at the ECN provided significant input in preparing for the ECN's EEIC two-day review workshop and for developing a sustainable business plan for the EEIC. IFES is also working in consultation with the ECN and EEIC to shape the development of EEIC's 2013 Electoral Educational Plan.

To strengthen the ECN's procurement management staff, IFES provided technical, logistics and managerial support to a procurement training workshop for 29 ECN HQ staff directly involved in procurement and logistics management from December 23-29, funded jointly by the ECN, IFES and

UNDP ESP. Working in conjunction with the ECN, IFES will provide similar support for five regional level procurement trainings currently planned by the ECN for next quarter. At the end of the quarter, IFES was assisting the ECN to review the content for these workshops, and supporting the external consultant engaged by the ECN for these workshops to develop more interactive program and lesson plans.

With IFES' technical support, in the previous quarter the ECN completed the Master and Regional Level Electoral Education Training of Trainers (TOT). This quarter, IFES provided feedback and suggestions on the Master TOT and Regional TOT sessions at a review workshop conducted by the ECN, and supported the ECN to revise the training content and provided technical advice for the implementation this quarter of district level trainings for 1400 electoral educators. IFES also provided technical support to the ECN's EEIC in designing and developing training curricula and contents for a nation-wide training program on electoral education for social studies teachers. IFES will be funding and facilitating pilot trainings for 300 social studies teachers in three districts in the next quarter.

Working in conjunction with the EEIC, IFES has continued to assist in developing the capacity of the EEIC library and research center staff to manage and operate library systems and to conduct public outreach events to publicize the EEIC and its library. With IFES support, EEIC has drafted a series of policies for library operations, including on library management, outreach activities and digitization of ECN documents such as political party records. At the end of the quarter these policies were before the Commission for approval. IFES has continued throughout the quarter to support the cataloguing of the library's physical and electronic resources.

IFES supported EEIC's collaboration with Tribhuvan University's Sociology Department in publicizing the EEIC library and EEIC activities to its students. Work has also commenced, after long delays caused by potential incompatibility issues with existing software, in planning the IFES supported development of software to provide remote access to some EEIC library facilities through the ECN website. IFES has extended the contract of its Library Development Consultant to the end of March 2013, to provide mentoring for the ECN's newly hired librarian and to support the digitization of ECN materials.

The US Election Program (USEP) study visit enabled a four-person delegation from the ECN to observe election operations in Washington DC, Maryland and Virginia for the US Presidential elections and participate in a series of workshops on electoral practice featuring eminent US and Latin American experts from November 3 - 7. The program was substantially supported by IFES with UNDP ESP providing funding support for one participant from the ECN. With IFES' support, the ECN organized a briefing for ECN officials in December on lessons learned from this visit. One member of the delegation also participated in a Kantipur radio program on the US election.

Results: Impact on EEIC's 2013 Electoral Education and business plans and development of the ECN's training strategy. The ECN HQ staff was trained in procurement procedures. Professional training sessions for electoral educators and social studies teachers were developed. EEIC staff was trained and mentored to manage and operate the EEIC library and conduct public outreach activities. ECN participation in the USEP study tour in the US and post-trip briefing.

3. Expanding and Improving the Delivery of Voter Education

Activity 3.1 Capacity Building Support to the ECN on the Design, Implementation and Evaluation of Voter Education Campaign

Summary: IFES continues to provide ongoing and daily capacity building support to the ECN and EEIC voter education efforts. This quarter, IFES' supported the ECN in commencing design work on new outreach products including a Nepali version of the ECN's publicity booklet and materials for local community level education. IFES worked with the ECN to support the finalization of manuals and presentation materials to be used by 1400 electoral educators from DEOs, District Education Offices, public schools, civil society organizations, and professional organizations. With the EEIC, IFES developed materials to be used in electoral education by social studies teachers. Technical problems with the ECN server were finally solved, allowing full hosting of the new ECN website on the ECN server. IFES' recruitment action for a web content developer has finally spurred the ECN into some action to institute a process for developing its web content, after months of inactivity. IFES worked with EEIC to conduct public outreach events. IFES provided significant advice to UNDP ESP supported VE consultants in developing the ECN's proposals for voter education strategy and ESP education materials.

IFES has continued to support the ECN's development of community level educators during this quarter, supporting the revision of materials to be used by over 1400 district level educators/resource persons in developing community level electoral educators. Similarly, IFES has provided technical support to the EEIC in designing and developing materials for use by social studies teachers on electoral education activities.

To provide materials support for community level education, IFES has contracted a design consultant to work with the ECN to design an electoral education pocket book, primarily for use in schools and by IFES CSO-led community education programs, in a program which is scheduled to commence during the next quarter. Design has also been initiated for a flip chart, for use at community education sessions in environments where electronic presentations cannot be used. IFES has also contracted a design consultant to produce a Nepali language version of the ECN's publicity booklet, the English version of which was published earlier in mid-2012.

During this quarter, the new ECN website became fully functional, including intranet facilities, and operating on the ECN server. IFES has involved the ECN very closely in the redevelopment of the website, which is likely to make it a more sustainable site than in the past. However, this has led to substantial delays in site development and uploading of content. Prolonged delay on the ECN's part in providing content eventually resulted in an ECN request to IFES in early December for hiring a content/materials writer for the website. IFES is intending to provide the required assistance in the next quarter to ensure updated contents are uploaded on the redesigned page shells. At the end of the quarter, the ECN was reviewing the need for external assistance on this, reconsidering developing web content through an ECN committee, a process that has been moribund for many months.

EEIC's collaboration with Tribhuvan University's Sociology Department in publicizing the EEIC library and EEIC activities to 150 students on December 13 was supported by IFES as part of the library promotion strategy. Due to such promotional efforts, the library is being increasingly used as a research tool by professionals in political science and interested persons. During this last quarter, even

with the extended holiday periods in October/November, 93 researchers visited the library to access its collection.

IFES provided extensive briefings to UNDP ESP's consultants on voter education and graphic design and provided them with a full range of 2010-2012 VE materials. The ESP consultants noted that neither UNDP nor ECN has any records of ECN and UNDP produced education materials for the 2008 elections and requested IFES assistance in locating copies, which IFES provided.

Results: Revised electoral education materials for district level electoral educators and development of these materials for social studies teachers. Support given to EEIC for designs for electoral education pocket book, and flip chart and Nepali language version of the ECN's publicity booklet commenced. The ECN's IT department more prepared for sustainability of the ECN website. Increased use of EEIC library by researchers.

Activity 3.2 Material and Broadcasting Support for Voter Education Campaigns

Summary: The major materials support for voter education this quarter was provided through IFES CSO sub-awardees for their campaign to support the ECN's voter registration program. Radio and TV PSAs produced last quarter were finally approved for broadcast by the Commission after some amendments. The ECN website redevelopment with IFES support is now complete and awaits content from the ECN. Innovative concepts – such as electoral education pocket books and flipcharts – on which design has been commenced this quarter are scheduled for production late next quarter.

Following on from its support for the production of 2,000 copies of manuals and 2,000 DVDs for the ECN's electoral educators in the last quarter, IFES this quarter agreed to support the design and production of at least 50,000 electoral education pocket books to be disseminated at the ECN's community level electoral education programs and through IFES' sub-grantees. At end of the quarter IFES also agreed to ECN's request to produce 5,000 voter education promotional bags, and contracting processes for this had commenced. Production of these items is expected next quarter

Due to IFES' persistent follow up, the TV PSA and Lok Dohari (folk song) produced with IFES support late last quarter finally received approval from the Commission late this quarter. The PSAs are ready for broadcast in support of ECN registration campaigns next quarter. At the end of the quarter, contractual arrangements were in process for IFES supported production of 200 CDs of the Lok Dohari, combined with another Lok Dohari produced by ECN, for distribution to local FM stations.

IFES also supported the production of a number of materials promoting the ECN's continuous voter registration program through IFES' sub-grantee CSOs. An informational radio PSA focused on encouraging youth to register on the voter roll was developed and broadcast on major radio station networks nationwide. Banners (110), leaflets (180,000), and greeting cards for returning migrant workers (87,500) promoting voter registration were produced and disseminated widely in the 23 districts in which the CSOs were operating this quarter.

At NDI's invitation, on November 21 and 28 IFES made presentations on the importance of motivating party supporters to register to vote at NDI's training workshops for district level political party leaders on promoting registration of party supporters in selected districts.

IFES continues to act as an advisor and a liaison between Yomari, the website design contractor, and the ECN for the ECN website redevelopment. Yomari completed the redesign of the ECN's website this quarter: it is now fully functional on the ECN server. Contents remain to be developed by the ECN.

Results: Completion of the ECN website redesign phase. Support for production of cards, leaflets, banners and a radio PSA by CSO sub-awardees supporting the ECN voter registration program. Finalization of TV PSA and Lok Dohari to support continuous voter registration.

Activity 3.3 Sub grants to selected NGOs to Develop and Deliver Voter Education Efforts

Summary: All five CSO sub-grantees completed their scheduled activities to end December, in motivating and educating their target groups, youth, women, Dalits, and Freed Kamaiyas, on continuous voter registration. A major focus of the program this quarter was on reaching potential voters, especially returning migrants, during the October/November festival season in Nepal - Dashain, Tihar and Chhat. Excellent coordination and communication was maintained between the CSOs and their respective DEOs. IFES and National Federation for the Disabled, Nepal (NFDN) commenced the development of the recently approved 2-year project to support participation in electoral/civic activities by people with disabilities.

During this quarter, IFES' five CSO sub-grantees – Dalit National Federation (DNF), Janaki Women's Awareness Society (JWAS), Nepal National Dalit Social Welfare Organization (NNDSWO), Nepal National Social Welfare Association (NNSWA), and Youth Initiative (YI) implemented an October 2012- January 2013 cost extension of their programs. Some readjustment of focus districts was made to target migrant laborers, returning home from India to celebrate Dashain, Tihar and Chhat. DNF worked in Rupandehi and Nawalparasi replacing Jajarkot, Salyan and Surkhet; YI expanded their existing work to also include municipalities in Dhanghadi (1), Dhanusha (1) and Morang (1). The total number of districts covered this quarter decreased from 25 to 23. A summary of target and actual beneficiaries (excluding from mass media) for this quarter is shown below:

CSO/Activity	# of Districts	# of VDCs/ Municipalities	Target Beneficiaries	Total	% of Target Achieved
DNF	4	40		34055	
Orientation to district staff on Current VR process			12	12	100%
Welcome, greet, inform and motivate incoming migrant citizens from India			20,000	23721	119%
Orientation to other groups			3,200	2760	86%
Orientation to Dalit self-help groups			800	694	87%
Information sharing through street dramas			5,000	6880	138%
JWAS	4	40		28258	
Orientation to district staff on Current VR process			17	45	265%
Welcome, greet, inform and motivate incoming migrant citizens from India			20,000	19651	98%
Orientation to other groups			3,000	3210	107%
Orientation to women self-help groups			800	877	110%
Information sharing through street dramas			1,800	4475	249%

NNSWA	5	91		52457			
Orientation to district staff on Current VR process			20	26	130%		
Welcome, greet, inform and motivate incoming migrant citizens from India			28,000	35989	129%		
Orientation to other groups			2,160	5800	269%		
Orientation to freed Kamaiya self-help groups			600	876	146%		
Information sharing through street dramas			5,000	9766	195%		
Help desk support at joint mobile camps					NA	3182	NA
NNDSWO	9	90		45931			
Orientation to district staff on Current VR process			27	53	196%		
Welcome, greet, inform and motivate incoming migrant citizens from India			11,000	17229	157%		
Orientation to other groups			12,000	11764	98%		
Orientation to Dalit self-help groups			1,800	2034	113%		
Information sharing through street dramas			9,300	10108	109%		
Support for voter registration					NA	1065	NA
Help desk support at joint mobile camps			NA	3678	NA		
YI	7	NA		19446			
Orientation to district staff on Current VR process			22	43	195%		
Welcome, greet, inform and motivate incoming migrant citizens from India			7,000	9613	137%		
Orientation at Colleges			1,250	1263	101%		
Awareness raising to college students			6250	6233	100%		
Help desk support at joint mobile camps					NA	2294	NA
Total			29**	324	NA	180147	NA

*NA=Initial target not set for various reasons

**Programs overlap in three districts

A total of 9,604 voters were registered by the ECN at mobile camps during this quarter: of these, 9,154 were assisted to register by IFES' CSO sub-awardees. Nepali workers in India have had no previous opportunity to learn about their voter registration rights and obtain information on how to register; during this quarter, IFES' sub-awardees greeted over 106,000 returning migrant workers and provided them with personalized information on how to register to vote while back in Nepal. These CSOs are also commencing to integrate voter education messages into their community activities for other projects and funders, thus expanding the reach of voter education messages beyond the formal voter education program.

DNF worked in close partnership with four different Dalit member organizations in selected VDCs of Rautahat, Nawalparasi, Kapilvastu, and Rupandehi districts. In this quarter, DNF's partner organizations welcomed, informed and motivated 23,721 incoming migrant laborers and other citizens on voter registration, at India-Nepal border check points. They greeted each one with a card that contained personalized festival greetings and voter registration information. They reached 3,454 Dalits through meetings with community groups such as mothers, farmers, and teachers groups and Dalit self-help groups. DNF disseminated continuous voter registration information to approximately 6,880 people through volunteer mobilization and street dramas. DNF held 36 formal and informal meetings with their relevant DEOs.

JWAS worked with their local NGO partners in selected VDCs in Dhanusha, Mahottari, Sarlahi, and Bara districts to reach women and men. In this quarter, JWAS welcomed, motivated and provided voter registration leaflets and greeting cards to 19,651 incoming migrant laborers and other citizens on voter registration, at India-Nepal border check points. JWAS reached 4,087 women through meetings of community groups such as mothers, farmers, and teachers groups and women's group visits, and disseminated voter registration information to 4,475 people through volunteer mobilization and street dramas. JWAS held 58 formal and informal meetings with their relevant DEOs.

NNDSWO worked through its district chapters in selected VDCs in nine districts in the far west region – Kailali, Kanchanpur, Dadeldhura, Doti, Baitadi, Darchula, Bajhang, Bajura, and Accham – focusing on informing and educating Dalit groups in target communities. In this quarter, NNDSWO welcomed, motivated and provided voter registration leaflets and greeting cards to 17,229 incoming migrant laborers and other citizens at India-Nepal border check points in three districts (Kailali, Darchula and Baitadi). The Kailali DEO, in particular, provided significant support for CSO efforts at border crossings. NNDSWO reached 13,798 Dalits through meetings of community groups such as mothers, farmers, teachers and Dalit self-help groups and disseminated voter registration information to approximately 10,108 Dalits through volunteer mobilization and street dramas. NNDSWO also assisted 3,678 Dalits and other community residents to register to vote through help desk facilities at mobile registration camps. NNDSWO and its district chapters held 123 formal and informal meetings with their relevant DEOs.

NNSWA worked in the districts of Dang, Banke, Bardiya, Kailali and Kanchanpur through mobilization of Freed Kamaiya Society (FKS) (Mukta Kamaiya Samaj) activists. In this quarter, NNDSWA welcomed, motivated and provided voter registration leaflets and greeting cards to 35,989 incoming migrant laborers and other citizens at India-Nepal border check points in four districts (Dang, Banke, Bardiya and Kanchanpur). NNSWA reached 6,676 Freed-Kamaiyas through meetings with community groups such as mothers, farmers, teachers and Freed-Kamaiya groups and disseminated voter registration information to approximately 9,766 Freed-Kamaiya and other community residents through volunteer mobilization and street dramas. NNSWA assisted 3,182 Freed Kamaiya and other community residents to register to vote through help desk facilities at mobile registration camps. NNSWA held 82 formal and informal meetings with the relevant DEOs.

YI worked in municipalities in Kathmandu, Lalitpur, Bhaktapur, Morang, Dhanusha, Kailali and Dang districts focusing on informing and motivating 10,876 youth on voter registration, through college level orientation/education sessions. YI welcomed, motivated and provided voter registration leaflets and greeting cards to 9,613 incoming migrant laborers and other citizens at India-Nepal border check points in Morang districts. YI assisted 2,249 youth and other community residents to register to vote through help desk facilities at mobile registration camps, and held 110 formal and informal coordination meetings with DEOs.

At the community and school level meetings, workshops and street drama performances conducted by the CSO sub awardees, a sample of attendees were tested both before and after the information awareness sessions, to give some indicative measure of information transfer. Data was collected during this quarter from 5,208 participants. Average scores were 58.3% for the pre-event survey and 87.0% for the post-test survey; thus indicating a significant rise (28.7 percentage points) in voter registration knowledge transfer, directly attributable to the CSOs' education program. Detailed results are as follows:

	No. of Participants	Correct Answers		Increase in % points
		Pre Test	Post Test	
Total	5,208	58.3%	87.0%	28.7
Disaggregated by CSOs:				
DNF	885	58.0%	78.1%	20.1
JWAS	1,220	39.5%	73.1%	33.5
NNDSWO	1,121	53.8%	94.4%	40.6
NNSWA	766	65.0%	94.5%	29.5
Youth Initiative	1,216	77.2%	95.8%	18.6

IFES's Project Manager and M&E Specialist made field trips during this quarter to monitor and support CSOs activities in the Mid-West, Far-West, West and Central Regions. IFES also organized a two-day project orientation workshop for the CSOs' project managers and finance officers to provide further training on the project activities and to develop activity plans for the new cost extension period for their projects.

During this project period, IFES provided interactive training to 63 survey supervisors and field enumerators from the five CSO sub-awardees, on how to conduct quantitative surveys, sampling methodologies, interview techniques, collection, entry and aggregation of data using SPSS, how to analyse data and prepare a summary survey report. During December, all five CSOs commenced preparations for January 2013 field data collection for 500 person sample mini-surveys on voter registration issues amongst marginalized populations in 20 districts. YI is surveying college students in Dhanusha and Kailali; NNDSWO is surveying Haaliya (Hill Dalits) and Badi women in nine districts in the far west region; NNSWA is surveying Freed Kamaiyas in five districts in mid and far west regions; JWAS is surveying Muslim women in four districts in the central Terai region; DNF is surveying Terai Dalits in four districts in central and western regions. Data from these surveys will assist the CSOs and the ECN to focus their voter registration motivation and information campaigns, by providing information about these marginalized communities on issues such as registration rates and citizenship certificate take up rates, and reasons for registering or not registering to vote.

Based on the revised 2012/2013 work plan, IFES commenced preparatory work on the 2-year (February 1, 2013 – January 31, 2015) disability project with National Federation of Disabled Nepal (NFDN). IFES is working in conjunction with NFDN to prepare and submit a detailed two-year proposal and budget for the project on *Developing Leadership and Increasing Electoral Participation of Persons with Disabilities in Nepal* to USAID Nepal, the concept for which was approved in early 2012. IFES has initiated the process for hiring a project coordinator for implementing the project and for identifying local level implementing partners, mainly disabled peoples organizations, to work with NFDN at the district and VDC level in six districts in the Mid and Far West Regions - Banke, Bardia, Dang (Mid-West) and Kailali, Kanchanpur and Dadeldhura (Far West).

Results: CSO help desks at India-Nepal border informed and motivated 106,203 incoming migrant laborers and other citizens. Distributed 87,500 festival greeting cards also containing voter registration information. 70,120 people educated on current voter registration activities through 1,601 events, including 110 street drama performances, 1,224 community level interaction sessions, and 267 college level orientation sessions. An average increase in community activity participants' knowledge of voter

registration by 28.7 percentage points. Over 9,000 marginalized community members assisted by CSO help desks to register to vote. 205 instances of media coverage of the CSO activities in local and national media. Intensive coordination with relevant DEOs through over 409 formal and informal meetings. Hands-on training to all five CSOs on survey implementation and preparations for survey field work completed. Preparatory work for 2-year program with NFDN supporting people with disabilities commenced.

4. Monitor, Analyze and Report on the Overall Electoral Process

Activity 4.1 – On-going Analysis and Reporting on the Evolving Electoral Environment

Summary: IFES continued monitoring, analyzing and reporting on the progress of electoral related developments and ECN activities, specifically on voter registration data, citizenship certificate issues, the ECN's plans to use EVMs versus paper ballots, draft election ordinances, minority quotas, and election preparation activities. Regular reports on program activity and analysis of the political and electoral environment were provided to U.S. Embassy officials, USAID, and other relevant stakeholders. Decisions made by the ECN relating to the caretaker government's intention to hold April-May 2013 elections, the ECN's voter registration figures against the recently released census data and latest voter registration data were translated and provided to relevant stakeholders, accompanied by IFES analysis.

Results: U.S. Embassy, USAID staff and other relevant stakeholders were kept abreast of electoral developments and ECN activities through regular reports, analysis and briefings. Regular IFES program updates given to USAID DGO for inclusion in the DGO weekly newsletter.

Activity 4.2 – Provision of News Clipping Service

Summary: IFES Nepal continued to deliver its daily news clipping service throughout the reporting period. This service is a compilation of online news reports that are relevant to the evolving political and electoral situation in Nepal. News reports are taken from the major news outlets in Nepal, such as the *Republica*, *Kathmandu Post* and the *Himalayan Times* as well as other reputable online sources of news and analysis on Nepali politics.

Results: Daily news clippings service provided to interested subscribers, serving to keep all domestic and international electoral stakeholders well-informed on developments in the political and electoral environment in Nepal.

5. Provision for unforeseen windows of opportunity

It is expected that the assessment of the current condition of the ballot printing presses at JEMC, commenced this quarter, will lead to a request to USAID next quarter for use of windows of opportunity funds to repair and provide sufficient spare parts for these machines.

6. General Management

Following USAID's guidance, IFES has not signed the project agreement with Social Welfare Council, due to concerns about some of the wording drafted by SWC. At the end of the quarter, it appeared that SWC may blacklist organisations that have not complied with such requirements. Also

following USAID's advice, the IFES Country Director applied for and received an extension of his non-tourist visa, until July 2013, pending resolution of issues with Home Ministry over the issue of an official or some other form of gratis visa. IFES awaits USAID's further guidance following USAID meetings with relevant Ministries.

IV. RESULTS/ACCOMPLISHMENTS

During the reporting period the IFES Nepal program has achieved the following major results:

1. Strengthening Democratic Legal Framework

Technical Assistance

- Parties and other stakeholders better informed on census data on ethnic groups and the minority representation effects of reducing the proportion of PR seats in a new parliament.
- Advice to the ECN on delegation of powers followed.
- Reviews of new party law draft and code of conduct in progress.

Organizational Capacity Building

- Enhanced stakeholder knowledge of practical impacts of changes to representation.
- The ECN has better understanding of election related legal issues in the current political environment.

2. Strengthening Electoral Management Capacity of the ECN

Technical Assistance

- The ECN and key stakeholders fully informed on issues relevant to electronic voting in Nepal.
- The ECN better informed of voter registration performance and assisted to use recent data to better plan future voter registration activities.
- The ECN convinced to have a backup plan for paper balloting at the next election.
- Consultants hired to assess ECN ballot printing needs and assessment commenced.

Organizational Capacity Building

- Gender and Elections BRIDGE workshop for media in Kailali District and 10-day TtF BRIDGE workshop in Kathmandu District successfully completed.
- Twenty one new BRIDGE facilitators partially accredited.
- Some improvements achieved to BRIDGE evaluation report.
- Impacts on EEIC's 2013 Electoral Education and business plans and development of the ECN's training strategy.
- ECN HQ staff trained in procurement procedures. Professional training sessions for electoral educators and social studies teachers developed.
- EEIC staff trained and mentored to manage and operate EEIC library and conduct public outreach activities.
- ECN participation in United States Election Program study tour in the US and post-trip briefing.

3. Expanding and Improving the Delivery of Voter Education

Capacity Building Support to the ECN on the Design, Implementation and Evaluation of Voter Education Campaign

- Revised electoral education materials for district level electoral educators and development of these materials for social studies teachers.
- Support to EEIC for designs for electoral education pocket book, flip chart and Nepali language version of the ECN's publicity booklet commenced.
- The ECN's IT department more prepared for sustainability of the ECN website.
- Increasing use of EEIC library by researchers.

Material and Broadcasting Support for Voter Education Campaigns

- Completion of the ECN website redesign phase.
- Support for production of cards, leaflets, banners and a radio PSA by CSO sub awardees supporting the ECN voter registration program.
- Finalisation of TV PSA and Lok Dohari to support continuous voter registration.

Sub grants to selected NGOs to develop and Deliver Voter Education Efforts

- CSO help desks at India-Nepal border informed and motivated 106,203 incoming migrant laborers and other citizens.
- Distribution of 87,500 festival greeting cards also containing voter registration information.
- 70,120 people educated on current voter registration activities through 1,601 events, including 110 street drama performances, 1,224 community level interaction sessions, and 267 college level orientation sessions.
- Average increase in community activity participants' knowledge of voter registration by 28.7 percentage points.
- Over 9,000 marginalized community members assisted by CSO help desks to register to vote.
- 205 instances of media coverage of the CSO activities in local and national media.
- Intensive coordination with relevant DEO
- s through over 409 formal and informal meetings.
- Hands on training to all five CSOs on survey implementation and preparations for survey field work completed.
- Preparatory work for 2-year program with NFDN supporting people with disabilities commenced.

4. Monitor, Analyze and Report on the Overall Electoral Process

On-going Analysis and Reporting on the Evolving Electoral Environment

- U.S. Embassy, USAID staff and other relevant stakeholders were kept abreast of electoral developments and ECN activities through regular reports, analysis and briefings.
- Regular IFES program updates to USAID DGO for inclusion in DGO weekly newsletter.

Provision of News Clipping Service

- Daily news clippings service provided to interested subscribers, serving to keep all domestic and international electoral stakeholders well-informed on developments in the political and electoral environment in Nepal.

V. FUTURE ACTIVITIES

For the next quarter IFES currently plans to focus on the following activities. These activities are based on the assumption that it is now highly unlikely that there will be an election in April/May 2013, and there possibly may not be an election until 2014 at earliest. They also take note of the likelihood that by mid-January 2013 there will be no Commissioners and hence no ability of the ECN Secretariat to institute new programs or policies. As it has in the last quarter, IFES will need to retain flexibility in these activities in the face of instability in the ECN, and the possibility of unexpected agreements on a new government and any election framework being made within the quarter.

1. Strengthening Democratic Legal Framework

- Support the ECN in further analyses, recommendations or drafts of ordinances, regulations and directives necessary to conduct an election, considering the methods of voting to be used.
- Support the ECN Secretariat to finalize its review of a new post-constitution electoral law, including incorporation of recent comments on the EDR framework
- Support the ECN Secretariat to amend draft party law considering comments received from parties at end December 2012 workshops.
- Continue to work with stakeholders to gain acceptance and broad consensus on a simplified electoral system for Nepal.
- Support development of Nepali technical advisory expertise on complex electoral system issues.

2. Strengthening Electoral Management Capacity of the ECN

- Continue to provide technical and capacity building support to the ECN for the implementation of the continuous voter registration program.
- Support regional training workshops on procurement for DEO staff.
- When UNDP ESP audit of the voter register is completed, review results and advise the ECN on strategies to improve the register.
- Continue to support the ECN with the assessment, development and planning of balloting facilities for the next election, whether by EVM, paper ballot or a mix of these.
- Continue to work with the ECN on improving training plans, curricula and materials.
- Provide training to ECN staff in website management
- Continue to support the development of the ECN's library and knowledge management, mentoring the ECN's new librarian and training selected EEIC staff in library operations.
- Support BRIDGE partners to finalize Nepal BRIDGE evaluation report and implement accepted recommendations.
- Support BRIDGE partners to finalise the 2013 BRIDGE program and provide logistics , facilitation and where agreed financial support for BRIDGE workshops
- Support content development for the Elections and Technology BRIDGE workshop postponed to first quarter 2013.
- Work with the ECN to develop and implement at least one tutorial program for core ECN staff and/or selected stakeholders using tailored BRIDGE methodology and materials.

3. Expanding and Improving the Delivery of Voter Education

- Continue to provide technical, capacity building and material support to the ECN's voter education for voter registration, focusing on support for continuous voter registration.

- Finalise content of electoral education programs for social studies teachers and support central and three regional pilot training workshops for these teachers
- Provide technical support for the ECN's school and community level electoral education orientation programs.
- Work with the ECN on support mechanisms and materials for school and community level electoral education orientation programs, including pocket books and flip charts.
- Continue to support the EEIC to design and produce publicity materials, including bags.
- Support the EEIC to finalize library policies drafted last quarter and to publicize its activities through outreach events.
- Support ECN publicity for voter registration initiatives planned for early 2013 – claims and objections and VDC level registration centres.
- Continue to assist the ECN with completion of phase 3 of website redevelopment and uploading of content.
- Continue to support the development of resources for the ECN's EEIC Library, including e-library access.
- Conduct five, 500 person sample mini surveys amongst marginalized groups on voter registration issues and initiate a national public/stakeholder survey on electoral issues.
- Continue the implementation and monitoring of sub-grants with five CSOs to facilitate the delivery of voter education campaigns to support continuous voter registration, focusing this quarter in particular on registration at DAOs, and targeted mobile registration camps.
- Commence implementation in 6 districts of IFES CSO sub-awardee program to develop leadership and increase electoral participation of people with disabilities.

4. Monitoring, Analyzing and Reporting on the Electoral Process

- Continue to provide ongoing analysis to the U.S. Embassy, USAID and other stakeholders on the emerging electoral environment and identification of key issues.

5. Windows of Opportunity

- With USAID concurrence, and according to the results of engineers' assessments, support the refurbishment and sustainability of ballot printing capacity in Nepal sufficient for the next election.

VI. EVALUATION/CONCLUSIONS

- The highly uncertain political and electoral outlook continues to affect IFES operations in Nepal, with potential election and non-election scenarios having to be considered for all activities, and made medium to longer term planning difficult. As with the previous quarter, this quarter IFES has been focusing on non-election date dependent activities. IFES' standing with both Commissioners and Secretariat at the ECN remains high, due to its willingness to respond quickly and professionally to assistance needs. With an expected imminent loss of all Commissioners and some senior Secretariat staff, IFES will need to build new ECN relationships over the next quarter. Electoral donor and implementer coordination is not as strong as it has been in the past: strong coordination will be required in the lead up to an election, as the ECN is shopping the same laundry list of assistance needs to multiple potential supporters.
- The political uncertainty is having an increasingly destabilizing effect on electoral management. At a psychological level, the more election dates that are announced and abandoned, the less belief there is that any date announced will actually come to fruition – making focusing on planning less attractive. Added to this is the lack of an agreed basic legal framework for a future election on which to plan – with critical issues such as the election system, the bodies to be elected, and even who will be eligible to vote (particularly if Madesh parties in the caretaker government can exert their influence) uncertain. The potential lack of a Commission entirely in January 2013 means that announcing an election date will not be sufficient – a package including Commissioner appointments is likely to have to be politically agreed for election preparations to commence. If an election is held it is essential that the ECN Secretariat is ready at the time of an announcement of a deal with both a draft election timetable and a draft set of election regulations/directives that can be amended as necessary. However the conceptual thinking necessary for this in the absence of an agreed legal framework is not in evidence yet.
- The then A/g Chief Election Commissioner retired in early November, and will be followed by his successor and the other remaining Commissioner on January 10, 2013. The three past Commissioners have maintained admirable political neutrality, and a commitment to impartiality. There appears little or no political inclination to select replacements, except as part of the holy grail of a package deal on all election related issues being sought by the caretaker government. Given that the Commissioners by law hold all decision making powers in the ECN unless they specifically delegate, it is possible that in the next quarter the ECN will go into a less responsive period of being able to implement only those programs approved by the former Commissioners. The current Secretary is also expected to leave in first quarter 2013 – after which the ECN Secretariat will be led by its sixth Secretary in 30 months. This is not an ideal environment for an inexperienced election management body to be ready to prepare for what will be a relatively difficult election.
- At the end of this quarter, after fifteen months of advice from IFES, the ECN recognized that it will need a ballot printing capacity for the next election. This was closely followed at the end of the quarter by the Indian Government rejecting the ECN's request for a grant of Indian-made EVMs for elections in Nepal, following which the ECN has realized that it may need to conduct the next election largely using paper ballots. This was a very late realization by the ECN, making it unlikely that existing ballot print capacity could be refurbished in time for an April or even for a May 2013 election. IFES will assess what needs to be done to restore sufficient ballot print capacity early next quarter. Given the poor to non-existent maintenance of machinery previously

supplied by donors for ballot printing, an analysis of the relative feasibility/costs for printing ballots outside Nepal may be warranted. In any case, the ECN appears not to have made any financial provision for printing of ballots. The likelihood that EVMs will not be used extensively at the next election has also affected the ECN's planned community outreach and training programs, much of which was planned to be based on familiarization with EVMs.

- The release of the first report on 2011 Census data made it possible for IFES to undertake and circulate further analysis of the ECN's voter registration data, though the format of the data released by the Central Statistical Bureau means that significant estimation still needs to be done to compare anything other than national aggregates of voters registered to census data. The data suggest that around three quarters of eligible Nepalis in country have registered to vote. However registration amongst 16-17 year olds (at around 6%) and 18-25 year olds (under 50%) is low. Women in country are also far less likely to be registered to vote than men - at 64% versus around 80%. IFES will be working with ECN and its CSO sub-awardees during the next quarter to raise these registration levels. Somewhat surprisingly, there appear to be only around 160,000 more people yet to be registered in the Terai than in the Hills and the percentage of people in country and registered to vote in these two ecological zones appear to be very similar. The delayed audit of the voter register will provide further useful guidance on future voter registration needs.
- Data lately available from the ECN and Home Ministry indicates that the bulk of voter registrations are currently being done at DAOs, but that a significant number of people who obtain their citizenship certificate at the DAO do not register to vote at the same time. Data also suggest that perhaps as many as two-thirds of those in country and yet to register to vote do not have a citizenship certificate. The availability of this recent data will assist IFES to shape current and future advice to the ECN and IFES support to voter education and registration activities.
- IFES training activities in the last quarter focused on a BRIDGE Facilitator Training session, and central training on procurement, with the ECN heavily involved in its training of district level electoral educators, and a long October/November holiday season. The semi-accreditation of 10 ECN staff and 5 staff from UNDP ESP and IFES as facilitators may relieve the pressure of 2012 on funding available facilitators. The BRIDGE program for 2013 has yet to be finalised, but ECN's proposals are even more ambitious than for 2012 – which was only around 65% completed. IFES is urging ECN to be practical in its BRIDGE program. As yet, the BRIDGE evaluation has not provided the input for future BRIDGE sustainability that IFES had hoped for. Following very positive feedback in early 2012, IFES is very pleased that the ECN has by the end of 2012 recognized that much more needs to be done to train lower level ECN staff, especially in district offices, which IFES has been urging. These staff will be one focus of training activity during the next quarter.
- IFES' five CSO sub-awardees have continued to develop and implement innovative, cost effective programs. The project to meet and provide personalized greeting cards to migrant workers returning across the India-Nepal border for the major festivals in October/November was a catalyst for cooperation – with election officials, immigration officials and armed police all pitching to assist. It provided information on participation rights to a sector of the population that has otherwise been ignored. There has been a noticeable increase this quarter in initiative – from both DEOs and CSOs – in identifying local education ideas for joint or CSO implementation. The mainstreaming of voter education in the CSOs' other projects will further increase the effectiveness of this program. Following the success of the pilot project by Youth Initiative in

mid-2012, all CSOs now have staff with basic training in survey work, and will conduct their first surveys next quarter. IFES intends that this capacity be used by the CSOs to institute small scale, minimal cost targeted surveys that can assist these CSOs to develop evidence based programming in all their activities.

- With IFES and UNDP ESP support, the ECN's Electoral Education and Information Center has commenced developing business and education plans for the coming year, which are highly ambitious. The ECN is rolling out its Local Electoral Education Developer (LEED) program, so far to district level, with the aim of having almost 5000 trained voter educators down to community level. The success of this program will depend on what activities can be funded for these educators once trained: inactivity will result in skills loss. The intended activities of this program appears now again appear to include smaller scale community based activities, which will make for easier integration of IFES CSO network educators' activities with the LEED program.